

Message Text

SECRET

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14

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAM-01 EUR-12 EB-07 SCCT-01 IO-10 /089 W

----- 057880

R 300447Z DEC 75

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2650

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T USINT BAGHDAD 1311

KUWAIT POUCH BEIRUT

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ

SUBJ: ABDUCTION OF OPEC OIL MINISTERS EMBARRASSES IRAQI REGIME

1. THE ABDUCTION OF THE OPEC MINISTERS IN VIENNA WAS A CAUSE OF CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT TO THE AUTHORITIES IN BAGHDAD. THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS CARRIED THE WIRE SERVICE STORIES WITHOUT COMMENT AND ON THE DAYS WHEN THE STORY WAS FEATURED IN VARIOUS EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPERS, SECURITY MEN WERE OBSERVED AT BAGHDAD AIRPORT SNATCHING NEWSPAPERS AWAY FROM ALL ARRIVING PASSENGERS. THE RETURN OF IRAQ'S OIL MINISTER TO IRAQ WAS GIVEN BRIEF AND ROUTINE COVERAGE WITH NO INDICATION OF HIS HARROWING EXPERIENCES DURING AND FOLLOWING THE OPEN MEETING.

2. THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR IN BAGHDAD ENCOUNTERED CONSIDERABLE
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CONFUSION ON THE IRAQI SIDE WHEN HE ATTEMPTED TO

COMMUNICATE WITH THE GOI DURING THE ABDUCTION. EVEN AFTER THE AFFAIR WAS OVER, HE FOUND THAT THE RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAD NO CLEAR GUIDANCE AND WERE RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THESE EVENTS WITH HIM.

3. COMMENT: SINCE IRAQ HAS GIVEN CONSIDERABLE LIP SERVICE TO THE "REJECTIONIST FRONT" PHILOSOPHY AND PERHAPS MORE TANGIBLE AID TO "REJECTIONIST FRONT" ORGANIZATIONS, THE SEIZURE OF THE GOI OIL MINISTER AS A MEANS OF PUBLICIZING THE "REJECTIONIST" DOCTRINE MUST HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY GALLING. IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE IRAQI CHARGE D'AFFAIRE IN VIENNA, A RELATIVELY JUNIOR DIPLOMAT, TOOK THE LEAD IN SPEAKING FOR THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN OBTAINING THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE ARAB STATES FOR THE COURSE OF ACTION ADOPTED BY THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT. HOPEFULLY, THIS EXPERIENCE WILL HAVE A SOBERING EFFECT ON THE IRAQI REGIME AND WILL TEMPTER THEIR PAST ENTHUSIASM FOR THE REJECTIONIST APPROACH AND FOR TERROR AS A POLITICAL WEAPON.
WILEY

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